

Memorial Minute — Dick Goodman

Dick Goodman is remembered best for his commitment to peace and social justice. He lived his life according to Jesus' words in Mathew 25, a passage that he often quoted in vocal ministry.

. . . "For I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you cared for me. I was in prison and you visited me."

. . . "Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?"

. . . "I tell you the truth, when you did it for one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it for me."

For sixty years, Dick devoted himself to the programs of the American Friends Service Committee. He began with characteristic humility by stuffing envelopes and then used his gifts as a teacher to become a tutor and eventually leader of weekend work camps with East 111th Street Project and Irvington House, clerked the High School Program, and tutor GED classes. His commitment and experience led to appointments to the NYMRO Executive Committee, the AFSC Corporation, and the AFSC Affirmative Action Committee. He encouraged several members of Westbury Monthly Meeting to become active with AFSC. His commitment to peace and justice led him to serve on the Board for the LI Council of Churches and to work locally with their programs. Westbury Friends remember his leadership in collecting food for their food bank and other local council efforts. Westbury Friends remember Dick's leadership as Clerk and Clerk of its Peace and Social Action Committee. At the Yearly Meeting level, he served on and eventually clerked its Witness Coordinating Committee. He also served as a Selective Service Counselor during the Vietnam War and answered the GI Rights Hotline during the build up to the Iraq war in addition to many other service efforts.

In addition to working for peace in the world, Dick was also a force for peace and reconciliation within the Society of Friends. Dick was drawn to Friends for its peace and justice but in time developed a deep connection to the roots of Quaker faith and practice and served as a bridge between more liberal and orthodox Quaker factions. He served for many years as a NYYM representative to Friends United Meeting a more Orthodox branch of Quaker faith where he helped heal mistrust and suspicions. This commitment led Dick and his wife Irene to transfer their membership late in life from Westbury to Manhasset Meeting to help revive a struggling meeting.

Dick put into practice the words of the Epistle of James which he often cited in vocal ministry, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?..... If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good^[a] is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead"